What’s With the Trees?  
New Saplings Line Penn Avenue

By Paula Martinac  
The Bulletin

If you’ve been wondering why new trees have cropped up along Penn Avenue before reconstruction of the corridor has even commenced, you’re not alone. “What’s with the trees?” has been a popular question at the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation’s office, and one that the BGC put to Lisa Ceoffe, Urban Forester with the Department of City Planning.

“This is part of PennVest,” Ceoffe told BGC deputy director Aggie Brose via email. (PennVest is the state’s infrastructure investment arm.) “We got $2.4 million for tree planting… We are trying to plant as many trees as possible along Penn, Liberty, Hamilton and other main thoroughfares.

Ceoffe said they at first steered away from Penn, knowing that the major reconstruction project between Mathilda and Evaline streets would not begin until next year. But after discussing the timetable for reconstruction with Pat Hassett, assistant director for the city’s Bureau of Transportation and Engineering, the decision was made to move forward with planting since the funding was in place.

Ceoffe told The Bulletin that between 50 to 75 trees are being planted along Penn, mostly American elm and hackberry. “We tried to stick to the recommended species list” that was created for the Penn Avenue plan.

Protection of the trees will be a condition of the construction contract, she explained; construction-grade fencing around the new trees will be installed to shield them from debris when the sidewalks and streets are torn up. The contractor will bear liability if anything happens to the trees, and Ceoffe said her office will monitor things as construction progresses to make sure the trees are safe.

“In a perfect situation, you’d put the trees in last,” Ceoffe said. “But sometimes things don’t work out perfectly.” Reconstruction of the Mathilda-to-Evaline portion of the corridor is slated to begin in late 2011.

Plans Brewing for Former Pap’s and Horoscope Sites

The building that used to house Pap’s n Us bar on Penn Avenue has been sitting vacant for almost two years, but may soon be brimming with activity and music. Down the avenue, plans are also afloat for the site of the former Horoscope Lounge.

As reported in The Bulletin in August 2008, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation purchased the Pap’s building at 5106 Penn and its liquor license from owners Richard and Janet Tysarczyk after a pending sale to another party fell through. The BGC’s goal was to be “interim owners… to pre-empt anyone else from purchasing the bar and its related property,” the BGC’s executive director Rick Swartz told The Bulletin at that time.

BGC and Friendship Development Associates subsequently put out an RFP that brought in several proposals for the space, but a sale did not go through due to financing difficulties. The BGC, however, is close to concluding the sale of the liquor license to a restaurant operator destined for Market Square, Downtown.

This spring, Mister Roboto Project began to show interest in the location for a mixed gallery/performance space, similar to that of Modernformations down the block. Roboto, a member-run cooperative that bills itself as “a comfortable and open space for people to experience a true DIY (do-it-yourself) community,” gave up its venue on Wood Street in Wilkinsburg last winter because it no longer met the needs of the expanding group.

Before Roboto can move in, how-

By Paula Martinac  
The Bulletin

FARMING IN THE CITY

Volunteers at Garfield Community Farm have recycled old tires and kids’ wading pools to create raised beds. Story on page 6.

The final deadline for all articles, ads, and Bulletin Board items for the August 2010 issue is THURSDAY, JULY 15, 2010. Placement is on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information: 412-441-6915.
Public Officials Turn Out for Broad Street Tour

On Thursday, June 10, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation Deputy Director Aggie Brose led city officials and community leaders on a tour of the 5400 block of Broad Street in Garfield. The BGC had received numerous complaints from residents in the block about suspicious loitering around vacant houses, excessive litter, and overgrown yards. Officials from the Bureau of Police, the Board of Health, the Bureau of Building Inspection (BBI), State Sen Jim Ferlo’s office, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, and the Mayor’s Office took notes on the problems they observed and will address them. Check back in future issues of The Bulletin for a progress report on this block walk.

Summer Means Jobs and Experience for City Youths

It’s summer in the city again, and that means the Pittsburgh Summer Youth Employment Program (PSYEP) is back. Hundreds of young people throughout the city will be employed in a variety of fields for a six-week internship aimed at providing them with the skills needed to meet the challenges of the working world.

Employment opportunities include positions both in offices and outdoors doing conservation work, with 887 youths aged 14 to 21 taking part. The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) will be taking on 140 of these young people for the summer, acting as their trainer, liaison, and mentor for the duration of the six weeks – as well as the source of their pay.

Recruitment of applicants for the PSYEP kicked into full gear in May. Two recruitment sites were set up to review and accept applications for the entire city: the Southside Goodwill and the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC), located in Garfield on Penn Avenue.

Efforts at the ENEC were led by Jeffrey Boykin, who managed training of the in-take staff, coordinated outreach to local schools, and oversaw daily operations. “We successfully recruited over 1,000 young people,” said Boykin. “What I’m excited about most is being able to positively impact these young people’s lives.”

In all, the collaborative efforts of these two sites, along with Lawrenceville United and a satellite site in the West End, were able to bring in more than 1,400 applications.

As the internship start date of July 6 draws near, 11 summer supervisors hired by the BGC are working hard to make sure everything is ready for the young interns. These supervisors will be coaches and guides for the youths in the program, since for many, this will be their first-ever job. Akiesha Gilchrist, one of the supervisors, shared her anticipation about the program: “We’re really excited to meet the kids and for the weeks ahead. From looking at the applications, these kids are ready. This is going to be a successful summer.”
Fate of East End Catholic Churches
Still in Limbo

The announcement in May that St. John Neumann School in Lawrenceville would close its doors this year brought resolution to the question of how Catholic school closures across the diocese would affect the East End. Now, attention has shifted again to the future of the area’s five Catholic churches, whose finances are precarious and whose attendance numbers have been dwindling.

In the fall of 2007, pastors and lay representatives from the five East End churches - St. Matthew and Our Lady of the Angels in Lawrenceville, Immaculate Conception/St. Joseph in Bloomfield, St. Lawrence O’Toole in Garfield, and Immaculate Heart of Mary in Polish Hill - began convening in a “Cluster Planning Team” to address, according to a pastoral letter, “the unique challenges we face at this point in our history.”

One possible scenario, as outlined by this team, was for three parishes to remain open - one in Polish Hill, one in Lawrenceville, and one in Bloomfield/Garfield - and two to close. The scheme, however, did not address the question of what to do with the buildings of the churches that would close. Then last year, the question of the churches was put on hold until decisions about school closures could be finalized.

According to Diana Newport, parish secretary for St. Matthew, a new task force began convening on June 15, 2010, to revisit the question of the churches. This committee is composed of the five pastors, a Finance Council member from each parish, and diocesan representatives.

By Paula Martinez

“We don’t know anything,” she told The Bulletin about the church’s future. “We won’t be able to tell you anything until we can tell our parishioners.”

The process of deciding the churches’ fate could be lengthy, explained John Flaherty, the Diocese of Pittsburgh’s Secretary for Parish Life and Lay Leadership. “The group is coming together to look first at studies of the church buildings and determine recommendations for them,” he told The Bulletin. Other pieces to consider will be staffing and programs. “They’ll be trying to put it all together.” The time frame for decision-making is fluid, he added, with “no drop-dead date.” But he also said that “things might fall into place quickly.”

After the task force arrives at a set of recommendations, the five parishes will each host a public assembly to present the proposal to its parishioners. Depending on the feedback from those assemblies, the committee may go back to the table and tinker with its recommendations before presenting them to Bishop David Zubik, who will then consult with the Priest Council. The bishop will make the final decision, but Flaherty stressed that it would emerge from the recommendations of the parishes themselves, not come down from on high.

When a plan finally emerges, Flaherty noted, it will focus on strengthening the communities the churches serve. “Parishes are about people,” he said, “not just buildings and programs.”

New For-Sale Housing Coming to Several Garfield Sites

By Joe Reuben

With the freshly minted Garfield housing and land-use plan in hand, several nonprofit entities are working to help push the percentage of owner-occupied housing in Garfield closer to the plan’s goal of 51 percent of all housing units by 2010.

Open Hand Ministries, an offshoot of Valley View Presbyterian Church, is wrapping up renovations to a single-family home owned by the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) at 423 North Fairmont Street in Garfield. The 3-bedroom property was purchased through the City of Pittsburgh’s Vacant Property Reserve program earlier in the year. Open Hand has identified a family now living in Garfield’s public housing community to be the future owner, and has worked with them to qualify for a mortgage loan to buy the house.

Open Hand regularly secures grants from various philanthropic sources, donations of materials, and reduced-price contractors, in order to put the houses within reach of families who otherwise might not be able to afford homeownership. A vacant house in the 500 block of N. Fairmount is next on Open Hand’s list.

Habitat for Humanity is looking to build as many as four new single-family homes in Garfield for families of modest means over the next 12 months. Working with the BGC and the city’s Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), Habitat has identified sites in the 4900 block of Kincaid St. and 300 block of N. Evaline Street. The URA has funds on hand from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that were part of the first round of funding in 2008 from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). The federal dollars can be used only to benefit families whose incomes are 50 percent or less of the median family income for the Pittsburgh region. A family of four, for example, with annual income of just $31,250 or less, would qualify to buy or rent housing built with NSP funds, and would fit the profile of those Habitat typically tries to assist with its housing developments. There is generally a “sweat-equity” requirement as well for the buyers of Habitat homes.

The Pittsburgh Housing Development Corp. (PHDC) has given the green light to its general contractor, Team Construction of the South Side, to start renovations to two vacant houses at 219 and 228 N. Fairmount Street in Garfield. Both were purchased through the city’s Vacant Property Reserve program, and will be offered for sale at prices of $155,500 and $189,900, respectively, upon completion. The house at 228 N. Fairmount will have an apartment that the homeowner can rent to help cover his or her monthly housing expense. Additionally, the Urban Redevelopment Authority will offer interest-free, second-mortgage loans of $25,000 to qualified buyers.

Repayment of this loan is deferred until the buyer sells or transfers title to the house to another party. This development will bring to six the number of houses PHDC has renovated on N. Fairmount since 2006. PHDC has plans to continue in future years with other vacant homes in close proximity to these Urban Redevelopment Authority projects, and is providing construction financing for the project, along with the URA and the PA Housing Finance Agency.

Finally, the BGC is finishing plans for five single-family houses it intends to build later this year with Garfield Jubilee Association (GJA) in the 5100 block of Kincaid Street and 5000 block of Broad Street. The two groups have collaborated to build 38 homes since 2002. These detached dwellings would offer 3 bedrooms, 2-1/2 baths, full basements, and either integral garages or parking pads. The sales prices are tentatively set at $140,000, and would come with interest-free, second-mortgage loans of up to $55,000 for qualified buyers. The homes are being designed by Tai + Lee Architects, based in Polish Hill, and the general contractor is Steve Catranel Construction, with offices in Wilkins Township. The BGC is seeking financing from PNC Bank, the URA and the PA Department of Community and Economic Development.

Meanwhile, two homes completed in 2009 are still available for purchase, at a price of $137,500 each; they are located at 4922 Broad Street and 4901 Dearborn Street. Interested parties should contact Barbara Murphy with GJA at 412-665-5208.
Our eyesore property this month is in Garfield, at 429 N. Negley Avenue – a 16-room mansion that must have been a showcase when it was built in 1920. According to the Allegheny County Real Estate website, Patricia L. Brown is the owner of the property, having acquired it in February, 2000. The tax bill is being mailed to Ms. Brown at 50 Hereford Street, Boston, MA 02115; taxes on the property are current. According to the county website, the property is a four-family structure, and five electric meters are clearly visible on the site.

When the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation staff visited the site at the corner of North Negley Avenue and Margareta Street, it was difficult to see the house for the weeds, which engulfed the entire front of the house as well as the side and rear yards. BGC staff contacted the Record Room of the Bureau of Building Inspection (BBI) and learned that the property had a current citation from May 17, 2010, for overgrowth.

BGC staff also found the front-door glass broken, and it appeared that the inner front door was not secured. A concrete pillar on the side of the house had fallen onto the sidewalk; there was peeling paint on the wooden porch pillars and possible other code violations.

When Ms. Brown was contacted in Boston to ask what her plans were for the property, she said, “One day I hope to do something with it. One thing at a time.” She then indicated she was working on another project, but did not elaborate. She stated that the grass was to have been cut on the North Negley site; but then she excused herself, as she was in the middle of a meeting. She requested the BGC’s number and said she would call back. (At press time we had not heard back from Ms. Brown.)

The property is on a main street and a prime corner lot. It covers 6,426 square feet of land in our community that needs to be addressed sooner than “one day.” The property has great potential and could be a showcase once again, but instead it adds to the blight and abandonment in our community, hurting property values in the nearby vicinity.

“One day I hope to do something” is not a good enough plan. The blight has no immediate effect on Ms. Brown, as she lives so far away.

Hopefully, Ms. Brown will call back with concrete plans and timelines, and we will keep you informed on our blog or in a future issue of The Bulletin.
Does this story sound familiar? You bought a house 30 or 40 years ago and raised your family there. You paid your mortgage and taxes diligently, and one day, the house was yours, free and clear.

Then your kids grew up, left the nest, bought homes of their own. Although your house started to feel big for two people, you and your spouse found that its affordability couldn’t be beat. Besides, the place carries lots of fond memories, echoes of happy times with your children.

But then you retire from your job, and your income is reduced. Still, your home requires upkeep. It’s hard to take care of the lawn and the hedges anymore, but there’s no extra money to pay someone else to do it, so weeds start to take over. One wet spring, the roof springs a leak or a gutter collapses. You close off rooms to save on rising utility bills. Then, sadly, your spouse passes away, money becomes even tighter, and your home is no longer affordable. You have to prioritize your bills, and food and medications are higher up the list than property taxes. Now, suddenly, after all these years, your house carries debt.

We see this scenario again and again in our neighborhoods. Unfortunately, it’s a scenario that doesn’t just have an impact on seniors, but may have a ripple effect, as two or more houses on a block can no longer be managed by their longtime homeowners, and the street starts to look shabbier than it used to. Worse still, if a resident dies and her children can’t afford to shoulder the debt, a once-cherished family home may become abandoned, a magnet for illegal activity, and eventually be demolished.

This familiar scenario benefits no one – not the residents, not their children, and not the neighborhood. It does not provide quality of life to seniors to stay in homes they can no longer afford or to lose their home equity due to debt and tax delinquency.

There is some relief for seniors age 60 or older who have lived in and owned their current residence for at least 10 years; they may be eligible for a 30 percent discount on their county property taxes. To be eligible, the gross household income must be $30,000 or less.

Another option for many of our older residents is to sell their homes, pocket the sales proceeds, and move to one of the fine senior residences the East End offers, like Laurentian Hall or Fairmont Apartments. Then they can enjoy their lives without the worries and costs associated with homeownership. One payment a month for a safe, clean apartment, plus the companionship of other people who share your experiences, can make an attractive alternative to the expense and loneliness of living on your own in a house that’s become unmanageable.

At the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, we’re happy to assist longtime residents in our neighborhoods in protecting their equity and reviewing alternatives to homeownership when the time has come to move on to a new stage of life. You may not be able to take all your possessions with you into that next period of your life, but you can always take your memories – your most cherished possessions – with you.

You can reach Aggie Brose, deputy director of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, at 412-441-6950 x15.
Garfield Community Day took place on Saturday, May 22, at the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation’s Community Activity Center on N. Pacific Avenue. Despite the rain, more than 50 community members showed up for a day full of fun, including music, games, art projects, and other family activities. Special thanks to Pittsburgh Public Allies, Garfield Community Farm, Irma Freeman Center for Imagination, Free Ride, King of Kings Baptist Ministry, Project 53, Morningside Church of God in Christ, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, and a number of community residents who pitched in to make this day a success.

4TH-GRADES AT FORT PITT ALA LEARNED ABOUT HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES AT GARFIELD COMMUNITY FARMS’ YOUTH URBAN FARMERS INITIATIVE.

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Residents Turn Out for Garfield Community Day

COMMUNITY FARM BRINGS FRESH ORGANIC FOOD TO NEIGHBORHOOD

By Kathryn Vargas
Bloomfield-Garfield Corp.

Garfield Farms meets many of its CSA members through the Food Bank at Valley View Presbyterian Church, for which the farm is the only provider of fresh produce.

This past year, the farm started a “young urban farmers initiative” at Pittsburgh Fort Pitt ALA. Partnering with the 4th-grade science class, farm representatives engaged the students in a number of activities about gardening and nutrition. Activities included building a compost bin in the classroom, growing seedlings, making trips to the farm, looking at the role of a food bank in the community, decorating bags for Meals on Wheels, and learning about healthy food choices. “Our growth has been steady but our presence at Fort Pitt in the second year really helped our outreach to youths in the neighborhood.”

Kelly Flanagan Dee, the Community Outreach Coordinator for the farm, hopes that this working day will continue to be community-supported and build unity among residents in support of the farm. “We see this as something owned by the community,” she said, “and we would be happy to get more people to come out and be a part of our growth. Anything that anyone can contribute is always welcome.”

The farm has initiated a number of community projects to facilitate its mission of bringing fresh food into neighborhood homes. The community-supported agriculture (CSA) program distributes fresh produce to households throughout the Garfield neighborhood. This is a donation-based co-op system in which families buy a share of the harvest based on what their means allow, and in return receive a basket of fresh produce each week during harvest. Currently, half of the baskets are reserved specifically for Garfield residents.

The farm also supports a summer internship program, and will be spending two days a week working on the farm with young participants of Valley View’s Freedom Summer Camp. They hope to also host a number of events during the summer months. If you are interested in more information about the farm, or if you would like to volunteer or donate to support the effort, please contact Kelly Dee at 412-874-8231 or k.flanagan.dee@gmail.com, or visit the website: www.garfieldfarm.com.

Kathryn Vargas/BGC

Community Farm Brings Fresh Organic Food to Neighborhood

Started in the summer of 2008 as a small community venture, the Garfield Community Farm has since grown into a flourishing asset to our community. The vision: to support economic, social and food justice by reclaiming unused land in the community to produce local organic fresh fruits and vegetables that are affordable and easily accessible to the community. The farm hopes to continue to build strong relationships with youths, families and residents to support this local urban food source in the neighborhood.

Every Wednesday until sundown, Garfield Community Farm staff, interns, and community volunteers spend time working on the farm. All community residents are invited to come out any time on that working day to become an active participant in the farm community. Kelly Flanagan Dee, the Community Outreach Coordinator for the farm, hopes that this working day will continue to be community-supported and build unity among residents in support of the farm. “We see this as something owned by the community,” she said, “and we would be happy to get more people to come out and be a part of our growth. Anything that anyone can contribute is always welcome.”

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On Sunday, September 19, 2010, Friendship homeowners will open their doors and welcome guests to explore the creativity and innovative touch of their homes.

This year’s tour features an eclectic mix of homes that boast renovations, both grand and small, of all rooms of the homes. From grand Victorians to lofts and townhouses, the tour will showcase the diverse housing Friendship offers, with everything from traditional character to sleek, modern design.

Back by popular demand, the tour will once again showcase the creativity of the artists, restaurants and businesses in the Penn Avenue Arts District. Several of our artists will feature their artwork in the homes on tour as well as in their spaces along the Avenue. Numerous businesses and restaurants will also be open for tour guests to explore. Visitors will enjoy free samples of food from some of the best restaurants in the East End at cafes set up in each of the homes on the tour.

“The Friendship House Tour is an opportunity for the people of Pittsburgh to experience an incredible community with unique homes and homeowners who welcome diversity, appreciate historic and distinctive architecture, and embrace preserving the buildings and green spaces for future generations,” says Kim Mangan, house tour committee co-chair.

Co-chair Kathleen Farrington adds, “The tour showcases the hard work, investment, and creative vision of the Friendship Development Associates (FDA), the Friendship Preservation Group (FPG) and Friendship’s outstanding homeowners and residents. This year, the variety on display during the tour reflects the diversity of our wonderful neighborhood.”

You can help make sure our neighborhood puts on its Sunday best by keeping the area around your home clean and free of trash. We want to show visitors to Friendship how beautiful our community is.

Tickets for the 17th Annual Friendship House Tour are $18 in advance and $20 the day of the event. Purchase tickets online at www.friendshiphousetour.org or from the Friendship Development Associates Office (5530 Penn Avenue, 412-441-6147 x 7). Tickets can also be purchased the day of the event at the tour starting point, The Glass Lofts, at the corner of Penn Avenue and North Fairmount Street.

The self-guided tour takes two to three hours to complete on foot; trolley tours depart from The Glass Lofts.

By Sarah DiLeo
Friendship Development Associates

THIS SPRING, PITTSBURGH JOB CORPS (PJCC) STUDENTS ESTABLISHED A WALKING TRAIL ON THE CENTER GROUNDS FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF, AS PART OF A NATIONAL EFFORT CALLED “LET’S MOVE JOB CORPS.” THE TRAIL IS A 1/4-MILE LOOP IN FRONT OF THE MAIN BUILDING. ALL OF THE MILES LOGGED AND SUCCESS STORIES OF PJCC HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED TO WWW.LETSMOVEWELLNESS.COM. TO DATE, PJCC HAS LOGGED MORE THAN 1,500 MILES.
Traveling can be rough on the body. Whether you are traveling alone on business or on your way to a sunny destination with your family, long hours in a car or an airplane can leave you stressed, tired, stiff and sore.

“Prolonged sitting can wreak havoc on your body,” says Dr. Scott Bautch, past president of the American Chiropractic Association’s (ACA) Council on Occupational Health. “Even if you travel in the most comfortable car or opt to fly first class, certain pressures and forces from awkward positions can result in restricted blood flow. One of the biggest insults to your system from prolonged sitting is the buildup of pressure in the blood vessels in your lower legs. Contracting and relaxing the muscles helps the blood flow properly.” Dr. Bautch and the ACA suggest the following tips and advice to fight the strains of travel before they occur.

**Warm Up, Cool Down**

Treat travel like an athletic event. Warm up before settling into a car or plane, and cool down once you reach your destination. Take a brisk walk to stretch your hamstring and calf muscles.

**In an Airplane**

- Stand up straight and feel the normal “S” curve of your spine. Then use rolled-up pillows or blankets to maintain that curve when you sit in your seat. Tuck a pillow behind your back and just above the beltline, and lay another pillow across the gap between your neck and the headrest. If the seat is hollowed from wear, use folded blankets to raise your buttocks a little.
- Check all bags heavier than 5 to 10 percent of your body weight. Avoid overhanging lifting of any significant amount of weight to reduce the risk of pain in the lower back or neck.
- While seated, vary your position occasionally to improve circulation and avoid leg cramps. Massage legs and calves. Bring your legs in, and move your knees up and down. Prop your legs up on a book or a bag under your seat.
- Do not sit directly under the air controls. A draft can increase tension in neck and shoulder muscles.

**Traveling by Car**

- Adjust the seat so you are as close to the steering wheel as comfortably possible. Your knees should be slightly higher than your hips. Place four fingers behind the back of your thigh closest to your knee. If you cannot easily slide your fingers in and out of that space, you need to readjust your seat.
- Consider a back support. Using a support may reduce the incidence of low-back strain and pain. The widest part of the support should be between the bottom of your rib cage and your waistline.
- Exercise your legs while driving to reduce the risk of any swelling, fatigue or discomfort. Open your toes as wide as you can, and count to 10. Count to five while you tighten your calf muscles, then your thigh muscles, then your gluteal muscles. Roll your shoulders forward and back, making sure to keep your hands on the steering wheel and your eyes on the road.
- Exercise your legs while driving to reduce the risk of any swelling, fatigue or discomfort. Open your toes as wide as you can, and count to 10. Count to five while you tighten your calf muscles, then your thigh muscles, then your gluteal muscles. Roll your shoulders forward and back, making sure to keep your hands on the steering wheel and your eyes on the road.
- To minimize arm and hand tension while driving, visualize your steering wheel as a clock face and hold it at approximately 3 o’clock and 7 o’clock, periodically switching to 10 o’clock and 5 o’clock.
- Do not grip the steering wheel. Instead, tighten and loosen your grip to improve hand circulation and decrease muscle fatigue in the arms, wrists and hands.
- While always careful to keep your eyes on the road, vary your focal point while driving to reduce the risk of eye fatigue and tension headaches.
- Take rest breaks. Never underestimate the potential consequences of fatigue to yourself, your passengers and other drivers.

**Contact Dr. Cutitta at 412-325-4100.**

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Reiki (pronounced ray’-key) is a holistic, natural, hands-on energy-healing system that supports a person’s own healing processes. For the fourth year in a row, the Cancer Caring Center, a local nonprofit in Bloomfield, is offering free Reiki treatments to its clients and their caregivers, through a partnership with Key Stone Reiki.

Reiki was developed in Japan during the last century by Dr. Mikao Usui. Cancer patients receiving Reiki treatments have reported the following benefits: improved blood cell counts; reduction of chemotherapy and radiation side effects such as nausea, neuropathy and fatigue; and increase in energy and vitality. Other frequently reported benefits include: alleviation of pain; relief of mental and emotional stress; deep relaxation; and acceleration of the healing process.

“Reiki healing can be used in conjunction with your regular medical program,” says Nancy Murray, Reiki Master and practitioner with Key Stone Reiki.

By Philip Buttenfield

Stone Reiki. “It does not replace or interfere with other treatment forms. In fact, Reiki can help enhance the effectiveness of other treatment forms and can help reduce unpleasant side effects, such as the nausea and fatigue associated with chemotherapy.”

A Reiki treatment, Murray says, is a very gentle and relaxing experience. A typical treatment lasts about 60 minutes and consists of the gentle placement of the practitioner’s hands on or above the client’s body while he or she sits or lies comfortably, fully clothed. Reiki clients are not required to concentrate or make any other active effort during the treatment, says Murray, so they have an opportunity to totally relax.

Free, private sessions are available at the Cancer Caring Center on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. or 7:15 p.m. Call Bonnie Shields at 412-622-1212 to register with the center and to make your appointment. The treatments are conducted by trained therapists from Key Stone Reiki, an alliance of Reiki practitioners in the Usui System of Reiki Healing. Key Stone Reiki has offered healing services in the greater Pittsburgh area and beyond since 1994. Please visit the KSR website at www.KeyStoneReiki.com for more information.

The Cancer Caring Center, located at 4177 Liberty Avenue (across from the Bloomfield Bridge), is dedicated to helping people diagnosed with cancer, their families and friends cope with the emotional impact of cancer. It is not an alternative to medical treatment, but complementary to it. The Cancer Caring Center offers many other free services in addition to Reiki, including one-on-one counseling and yoga; call or drop in to learn more about what is available. The center’s hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and the space is wheelchair accessible; phone: 412-622-1212.

YOU CAN QUIT SMOKING

By Dr. Amy J. DiPlacido

Bloomfield-Garfield Family Health Center

There are many options for quitting smoking these days. Let’s look at a few of them.

“Cold turkey”: This is a great method for people to try first because it doesn’t require spending any money. Try to cut back on the number of cigarettes you smoke each day before you arrive at your actual quit date. Once your quit date arrives, throw out those cigarettes and ash trays and see how it goes.

Nicotine replacement products: There are a wide variety of nicotine replacement products on the market, including but not limited to nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges. They supply nicotine to your body so you don’t need to light up. These products can be tapered down gradually until you won’t need them anymore. Many products are available over the counter without a doctor’s prescription, and some may be covered by your health insurance plan. Don’t smoke cigarettes while using nicotine replacement products, especially with nicotine patches.

Medications: Two medications commonly used include Bupropion (also called Zyban) and Varenicline (also called Chantix). These medications can be very effective in helping you quit smoking, although they are not for everyone. If a person is already on psychiatric medications, then your provider may be less likely to prescribe one of these medications. Bupropion can lower a person’s seizure threshold. Varenicline can cause wild, crazy dreams, among other things. These medicines are usually taken for about three months. No matter what method you want to try, make sure you have the support of those around you. There are counseling groups for smoking cessation, which many people find beneficial. You may need to find other ways to entertain your hands and mouth, like eating pretzel sticks or chewing sugarless gum. Talk with your health-care provider about other suggestions that might help you quit.

There are two very important final reminders. First, it is never too late to quit smoking! There are always benefits to your health if you quit. And second, do not get discouraged if you try to quit but fail. Most smokers need to try to quit more than five times before it finally works.

This is Dr. Placido’s final article for The Bulletin. We thank her for writing her informative column for us for more than two years, and wish her well as she continues her training in geriatrics at UPMC St. Margaret Hospital.
Glass Lofts on Facebook

The Glass Lofts recently launched a Facebook page, and we need to build our group. If you haven’t become our friend already, please search “Glass Lofts Pittsburgh” on Facebook and join us. We also need you to invite your Facebook friends to join the group. Please help us spread the word. It’s time for a Glass Lofts Facebook frenzy!

Open House for New ‘L’Ville Vet

A new veterinary hospital in Lawrenceville will open its doors Monday, July 5. The Big Easy Animal Hospital, founded by Aileen Ruiz, DVM, is named after her home, New Orleans. In 2005, after Hurricane Katrina destroyed much of New Orleans, Dr. Ruiz came to Pittsburgh to rebuild her life and to continue practicing medicine. She now proudly calls Lawrenceville her home. The Big Easy is a full-service animal hospital with modern, in-house diagnostics and surgical facilities, offering wellness, preventative, and urgent care. An open house will be held on Saturday, July 10, from 5-8 p.m. Music will be provided by DJ Zombo, with food and drinks from various local restaurants and palate partners. The Big Easy is located at 5328 Butler Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201. Phone number: 412-908-9301. The website address is: www.tbeah.com.

Vacation Bible School

East liberty Lutheran Church, 5707 Penn Ave., will sponsor Vacation Bible School, August 9-13, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for ages 3 and up. Theme: High Seas Expedition. Children will learn about God, make crafts, play games, and eat lunch. Registration is free. If you have any questions, call Vicar Melba at 412-212-8794.

Community Garden Care

Weekly garden care and tending take place at the Garfield Community Farm every Wednesday from 6 p.m. until dusk (weather permitting), at the farm site, corner of Wicklow and Cornwall Streets in Garfield.

Helping Seniors Live Safely

Falls have become serious problems that jeopardize the ability of seniors and those with special needs to live independently. Lifeline with AutoAlert is available for less than $2 a day, making it affordable for seniors to live independently in the comfort of their own homes. Thanks to a partnership between the Red Cross and Philips Home Healthcare Solutions, Lifeline devices featuring AutoAlert have a hi-tech sensory system that can sense when a fall has occurred. The device automatically activates the Lifeline system, which then calls for help. For more information, please call toll-free 1-800-959-6989, visit the Red Cross Southwestern Pennsylvania chapter’s website at swpa.redcross.org, or call the local chapter at 412-263-3100.

Lawrenceville Farm Stand

The Farm Stand Project of the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank provides fresh, affordable produce to low-income neighborhoods that have limited access to grocery stores. The farm stands accept payment in cash, WIC and Senior Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) checks, and Food Stamps/EBT. An East End’s farm stand will once again be at the Stephen Foster Center, 286 Main Street, Lawrenceville, every Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The stand will operate every week from June 10 to November 11, and is open to the public. For more information, please call the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank at: 412-460-3663 x216.

Free Voice Mail Service

If you’re looking for a job and currently don’t have a cell or home phone for callbacks, check out Community Voice Mail, a free voice mail service offered through the Travelers Aid Society. Clients who sign up are given a password-protected mailbox where they can receive messages, and have the option of recording a personal greeting. Setting up a personalized mailbox takes about 10 minutes, and can be done over the phone at 412-281-0751, or in person at the the Travelers Aid office in the Greyhound Bus Terminal, 11th Street and Liberty Avenue.

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Call for Houses for Lawrenceville Tour

The Lawrenceville House Tour Planning Committee is seeking houses for the 2010 Hospitality House Tour scheduled for Sunday October 3 from noon to 5 p.m. Homeowners can nominate their own homes. Community residents can also nominate houses they feel would promote the spirit of the tour. Nominated houses should be restored or renovated in a thoughtful, creative or unique manner that reflects the labor many of our residents have invested in restoring and living in some of the neighborhood’s unique homes. Houses must be located in the 6th, 9th and 10th wards. Volunteers are also needed to serve on the planning committee in the following capacities: Ad Book, Public Relations, Donations, Volunteer Coordination, Home Owner & Volunteer Training, and Thank-You Party Planning. For information contact Kate Bayer at 412-600-2068 or kb 4738@yahoo.com.

Unblurred: First Fridays on Penn

With the first Friday of July right around the corner, it’s time for Unblurred: First Fridays on Penn! Join the Penn Avenue Arts Initiative and Penn Avenue Artists for our monthly art event on Friday, July 2, for an evening full of great art, great people, great food and great fun. This month’s Unblurred features a jam-packed schedule, with events at Most Wanted Fine Art, Pittsburgh Glass Center and many, many more. For a complete schedule visit www.pennavenuearts.org or pick up a handbill/map at participating locations. Unblurred is a monthly event that opens the Penn Avenue Arts District (4800-5500 Penn) for exploration by adults and children.

L’ville Little Flea

The Lawrenceville Little Flea takes place every Saturday (weather permitting) at the corner of Butler and 36th streets from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Little Flea is a weekly outdoor marketplace featuring a rotating variety of flea, thrift, craft, food and cultural activities. For more info and to apply, visit lawrencevilletitleflea.blogspot.com. We’re actively seeking vendors, musicians and artists.

Building Trades Career Fair

On Thursday, July 29, the COR/ELDI Section 3 Job Training & Referral Initiative will host a Building Trades and Crafts Career Fair at the Kingsley Association, 6435 Frankstown Avenue, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The fair will provide awareness about careers, trainings, and registered apprenticeships and general industry information. Participating organizations include the Builders Guild, MWELA, CCAC and Renaissance III, 2000, Inc., as well as workforce development agencies. For more information, please contact Section 3 Coordinator, Kevin.Mickens@eastliberty.org or at 412-661-2600.

Irma Freeman Summer Classes

Imagine what you can do at the Irma Freeman Center for Imaginatioin! Summer classes start July 5: Yoga – Mondays, 6:30-7:45 p.m.; West African Drum Class – Sundays, 2:30-3:30 p.m.; African Drum Circle – every 3rd Sunday, 4-6 p.m.; It’s Good To Be Me: Yoga for Kids – Wednesdays 5-5:50 p.m.; Green Architecture & Me (July 5-9), 9 a.m.-12 p.m.; Marvelous Mosaics (July 12-16), 1-3 p.m. & Wednesdays 6:30-8 p.m.; Puppet Stories (July 5-9), 1-3 p.m.; DIY Green Energy (July 19-23), 1-3 p.m.; Kid Power Week (July 26-30), 9 a.m.-12 p.m. The IF Center is at 5006 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15224. For pre-registration, call 412-924-0634 or email Sheila Ali at sheiladali@yahoo.com. Leave contact information & interests. For details see www.irmafreeman.com. Coupons, scholarships available!
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Our comprehensive program not only delivers state-of-the-art treatment for burns, but also focuses on improving care through research and preventing injuries through extensive educational outreach. Our programs are designed to give everyone -- from students to parents to first responders to health professionals -- the tools needed to prevent injury and promote healing.

For more information on West Penn Burn Center or to schedule an outreach program, call 412-578-5273 or visit www.westpennburncenter.com.